

IMPORTING A POPULATION

BY EDWARD P. IRWIN,
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(Continued from Yesterday)

The Story of the Portuguese.

In the forties and fifties of the last century a few Portuguese came to Hawaii, chiefly sailors, who deserted or otherwise left the whaling vessels on which they were employed. These formed the nucleus of what is now one of the most important divisions of the population of Hawaii. Those early Portuguese established homes in the Islands and raised families. Some of them tilled their little plots of land; others went into business.

Up to 1853, however, there were but eighty-six of them in the Islands, and the next quarter of a century brought only a comparatively small number, the Portuguese in 1878 numbering 436. Few of them, or of those who came later, hailed directly from Portugal, being chiefly natives of Fayal, Graciosa, St. Jorge and the Cape Verde Islands.

Even thirty-five years ago the scarcity of labor was a serious drawback to the success of the plantations, and when, in 1876, the reciprocity treaty with the United States was concluded, by which Hawaiian sugar was admitted to the States at a low rate of duty, thereby making the sugar industry permanent and much more profitable, the demand for more and better labor became pressing, and the Kingdom decided that something must be done. Through the agency of Dr. Hillebrand, the Royal Commissioner of Immigration, arrangements were made to recruit laborers in Madeira and the Azores. On September 30, 1878, the sailing vessel Priscilla arrived at Honolulu with 180 Portuguese contract laborers.

This was the beginning of assisted immigration to Hawaii—of a system which, in some form or other, has been in effect up to the present time, and which the last importation of laborers, that of the Russians, has in all probability fortunately brought to an end. For while there have been some good results from the system, the evil effects are to-day a curse to the country.

From that time up to the present Portuguese have poured into Hawaii, until today the Portuguese population numbers about 20,000. Shipload after shipload came around the Horn. The current of immigration was fully established by 1882, a treaty of immigration being arranged between Portugal and the Kingdom of Hawaii.

Portuguese Good Citizens

As a whole, the Portuguese have made good citizens. They are industrious, thrifty and economical. None has made a large fortune, yet there are few who are abjectly poor—notwithstanding the fact that those who went to the

plantations have had to work for ridiculously small wages. Associate Justice Perry, of the Supreme Court, is a Portuguese, his father being one of the first who came to the Islands. Frank Andrade, district magistrate of Honolulu, is a Portuguese. Last year four of the members of the legislature, Castro, Correa, Affonso and Furtado, were Portuguese.

The Portuguese of Hawaii own real estate valued at about \$3,000,000. They have two or three newspapers and several mutual benefit societies. Two of the latter have 1,800 members each.

The last lot of Portuguese that were brought to Hawaii as assisted immigrants came last year, being recruited in the Azores and Madeira by A. J. Campbell, special agent of the Territorial Board of Immigration. But they did not prove an entire success, for most of them are poorer mentally, physically and morally than those who came earlier. Furthermore, it cost the Territory a large sum to bring them to the Islands, partly on account of accidents and partly on account of poor judgment. About 778 Portuguese arrived in the steamship Swanley, and they cost the Territory about \$150,000. Most of them, however, are now settling down as plantation laborers.

A Pinch of Porto Rican in the Mess

If the importation of the Russian immigrants is a serious mistake, the bringing into the country of about 5,000 Porto Ricans was a blunder that was hardly less than a crime. The sugar planters fatuously hoped that in the Porto Rican they might find the solution of the labor problem. But they didn't; they only made still worse the social and economic conditions of the Territory. Fortunately, many of the Porto Ricans have gone away. Some have been hanged and others are in jail. Of the remainder, a portion are working on the plantations; but many are loafing about Honolulu, living in the filthiest tenements, doing as little work as possible, and being looked upon with suspicion every time a crime is committed by an unknown offender.

The Porto Ricans had been in Hawaii but a short time when they began to complain noisily that they were not well treated. They made so much noise about it that the Federal Government in 1903 sent a commissioner from Washington to investigate into the truth or falsity of the tales that had reached the National Capital. The following extracts from his report pretty well sum up the Porto Rican situation as regards Hawaii:

Were Not Promising.

"The Porto Ricans gave the least promise, either as citizens or as labor-

ers, when they arrived. They had been carelessly recruited at a time when the laboring population of Porto Rico was in a condition of acute distress. Few were in a physical condition to make the long voyage when they embarked; they were mostly people from the coffee country, who had been starved out when the region was devastated by the hurricane of 1899. They were half-starved, anaemic, and, in some cases, diseased. A considerable number were petty criminals, wharf-rats and prostitutes from Ponce and other coast towns. They were not so much representatives of Porto Rico as of famine and misery in the abstract when they arrived at Honolulu. Numbers of the men were afflicted with hydrocele and other diseases, and were manifestly incapable of working their way among the immigrants. But this was hardly the fault of the Hawaiian planters, who spent nearly \$565,000 to get these men, or more than \$192 passage money and recruiting expenses for every adult male arriving, and who were practically interested in their physical welfare. . .

When they reached the plantations, many of them were taken to the hospitals, and never left them alive. They did not know how to take care of themselves. They were morally upset by their long travels and changed environment, and many could not acquire the new habits of life necessary to their new condition. So a considerable number of them became strollers and vagabonds, and whenever possible flocked into the towns.

"The planters appear to have kept their side of the agreement. In most cases, however, the men have left the plantations where they were originally employed, and have wandered from place to place, taking positions as fancy or necessity dictated. Their habits are untidy, and this prejudiced the managers of the plantations and the people against them. They became unpopular on account of the large number of criminals that accompanied them. Thieving was extremely rare in the country districts previous to their arrival. Doors and windows were seldom locked, and small articles could be left about with perfect safety. With the arrival of the Porto Ricans all this was changed.

"Commitments to Oahu prison during the first ten months of 1902 were, per thousand inhabitants: Japanese, 1.1; Chinese, 3; whites, 5.3; Hawaiians, 6.1; Porto Ricans, 33.2."

Notwithstanding, the planters are still casting envious eyes in the direction of Porto Rico, and last year it was announced that they were going to send agents to that Island again to recruit more Porto Rican labor. The announcement raised an outcry that made them pause. Ex-Governor Cleghorn declared that if any attempt were made to bring in more Porto Ricans, he would appeal to Congress to put a stop of it. This threat was effective, for there is no desire to have the Federal authorities examine too closely into immigration methods.

(To be continued)

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